

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1-25 (Canceled).

Claim 26 (New): An image processing apparatus, comprising:  
a first hardware resource;  
a second hardware resource;  
a plurality of applications configured to implement image processing operations;  
a first program, within a platform, configured to receive a processing instruction from any of the plurality of applications, the first program configured to control the first hardware resource based on the received processing instruction;  
a second program, within the platform; different from the first program, configured to receive a processing instruction from any of the plurality of applications, the second program configured to control the second hardware resource based on the received processing instruction;  
wherein the first and second programs are shared by the plurality of applications.

Claim 27 (New): The apparatus of Claim 26, further comprising:  
an application program interface configured to receive a processing instruction from any of the plurality of applications using a predetermined function.

Claim 28 (New): The apparatus of Claim 26, wherein one of the first and second programs comprises:

a control program configured to interpret a processing instruction from the plurality of applications and to generate a request for hardware resources.

Claim 29 (New): The apparatus of Claim 28, further comprising:  
a system resource program configured to manage at least the first and second hardware resources, via a general purpose operating system, and to arbitrate between requests for hardware resources from the control program.

Claim 30 (New): The apparatus of Claim 26, wherein one of the first and second programs comprises:

at least two from among a memory control program configured to control a memory, a control program configured to interpret a processing instruction from the plurality of applications, an operation control program configured to control an operation panel, a fax program configured to control a fax application, and a network control program configured to control communications with a network.

Claim 31 (New): The apparatus of Claim 26, wherein:  
the plurality of applications are configured to be individually added and removed from the information processing apparatus.

Claim 32 (New): The apparatus of Claim 26, wherein the plurality of applications comprise:

at least one of a printer application, copy application, fax application, scanner application, net file application, and process inspection application.

Claim 33 (New): An image processing method, comprising:

controlling, by a plurality of applications, image processing operations at an image processing apparatus;

receiving, at a first program within a platform, a processing instruction from any of the plurality of applications;

controlling, by the first program, a first hardware resource based on the received processing instruction;

receiving, at a second program within the platform different from the first program, a processing instruction from any of the plurality of applications; and

controlling, by the second program, a second hardware resource based on the received processing instruction;

wherein the first and second programs are shared by the plurality of applications.

Claim 34 (New): The apparatus of Claim 33, wherein receiving at the first or second program within the platform comprises:

receiving, at an application program interface, the processing instruction from any of the plurality of applications using a predetermined function.

Claim 35 (New): The apparatus of Claim 33, further comprising:

interpreting, at a control program, a processing instruction from any of the plurality of applications; and

generating, at the control program, a request for hardware resources.

Claim 36 (New): The apparatus of Claim 35, further comprising:

managing, at a system resource program, at least the first and second hardware resources, via a general purpose operating system; and arbitrating, by the system resource program, between requests for hardware resources from the control program.

Claim 37 (New): The apparatus of Claim 33, wherein one of the first and second programs comprises:

at least two from among a memory control program configured to control a memory, a control program configured to interpret a processing instruction from the plurality of applications, an operation control program configured to control an operation panel, a fax program configured to control a fax application, and a network control program configured to control communications with a network.

Claim 38 (New): The apparatus of Claim 33, wherein the plurality of applications comprise:

at least one of a printer application, copy application, fax application, scanner application, net file application, and process inspection application.

Claim 39 (New): An image processing apparatus, comprising:  
a plurality of means for controlling image processing operations at an image processing apparatus;

means for receiving a processing instruction from any of the plurality of means for controlling image processing operations;

a first means, within a platform, for controlling a first hardware resource based on the received processing instruction;

a second means, within the platform, different than the first means, for controlling a second hardware resource based on the received processing instruction;  
wherein the first and second means for controlling are shared by the plurality of means for controlling image processing operations.

Claim 40 (New): The apparatus of Claim 39, wherein said first and second means for controlling, comprise:

means for interpreting a processing instruction from the plurality of applications; and  
means for generating a request for hardware resources.

Claim 41 (New): The apparatus of Claim 39, further comprising:  
means for managing at least the first and second hardware resources, via a general purpose operating system; and  
means for arbitrating between requests for hardware resources received from the means for managing.

Claim 42 (New): The apparatus of Claim 39, wherein one of the first and second means for controlling comprise:  
at least two from among a means for controlling a memory, means for interpreting a processing instruction from the plurality of means for controlling image processing operations, means for controlling an operation panel, means for controlling a fax application, and means for controlling communications with a network.

Claim 43 (New): The apparatus of Claim 39, wherein the plurality of means for controlling image processing operations, comprise:

at least one of means for controlling a printing operation, means for controlling a copying operation, means for controlling a fax operation, means for controlling a scanner operation, means for controlling a net file operation, and means for controlling a process inspection operation.